

JACK
THE GIANT
Killer

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
LONDON AND NEW YORK.



JACK THE GIANT KILLER.

IN ancient times the good people of Cornwall were sadly frightened at many wicked giants, who came from different places, robbing and killing all that fell in their way. Amongst them was the giant Cormoran, who had a great castle on a rock which stood in the sea. He often waded through the water and came over to the coast, when all the people would flee before him. After he had feasted himself upon their cattle, he would carry off with him a number of sheep and oxen, slung across his back.

Now there was a very little fellow, named JACK, who was not like other boys, but was as bold and as strong as a man; and when he was told the shocking things that had been done by Cormoran, he would say to his father quite bravely, "Shouldn't I like to kill that giant!" One night, having heard from his father more sad tales of Cormoran's doings, Jack felt more than ever a wish to kill him; so by-and-bye he slipped out, and got together a dark lantern, a pickaxe, a shovel, and a horn, and with these he left the house quietly, and came near the giant's castle, which stood on a hill.

Jack then dug a huge pit, just at the foot of the hill, over which he strewed sticks and turf, so that it looked like the rest of the ground. At daylight he went to the castle-gate, and blew his horn so loudly that he aroused the giant, who roared out, "You little villain! you shall pay dearly for this!" Down the hill he rushed after Jack, until he came to the bottom, and in a moment tumbled head over heels into the pit. There he stuck fast, Jack all the while crowing over him, and asking him why he did not come out and meet him like a man. Jack then laid hold of his pickaxe, and taking a good aim, struck Cormoran a terrible blow on the crown of his head, which killed him outright.



One day, when Jack was strolling about, a giant pounced upon him, carried him home in his pocket, and threw him into a room full of bones, telling him to keep quiet while he sharpened a knife to kill him with, for he meant to cook him for dinner, if he could get another giant who lived close by to come and dine with him. Jack looked about the room, and found two strong ropes; he made loops at one end of each, got up to the window, and waited till the two giants came to the door. Directly they were under the window, he dropped a loop over each head, and quickly threw the ends over a beam, and hoisted them from the ground, kicking and struggling. Jack then glided down the ropes, and put an end to the giants with his new sharp sword, and let all the prisoners loose.

Jack next came to a great house, and a giant with two heads asked him to walk in; after supper, he put him in the best bed, but Jack, fearing mischief, kept wide awake. Presently the giant crept softly up to the bed, and banged away upon it with his club, but Jack had put a sack of bran there, that was lying in the room. At breakfast next morning, the giant said, "Pray how did you sleep?" "Pretty well, but for the rats," said Jack. The giant then filled two bowls with porridge; Jack ladled his into a leather bag inside his waistcoat, and then said, "Look here; see what I can do!" and cutting the bag, the porridge fell on the floor. "I can do that too!" roared the giant, and with his knife ripped his own stomach up, and died on the spot.

Soon after this, Jack was invited to King Arthur's court, and while he was there the King's son asked him to go with him to attack a huge giant, who was the terror of one part of the country. When the Prince and his little friend arrived at the giant's castle, the former concealed himself behind a tree, while Jack boldly knocked at the castle-gate. "Who is there?" growled a voice of thunder. "Only a weary





traveller," said Jack. "Well, then, what news do you bring?" "Oh, very bad! King Arthur's son is coming here, with a powerful army, to burn your castle and to put you to death!" "Pray come in, take my keys, and hide me in the deep stone cellar till they are gone." As soon as the giant was safe under lock and key, Jack let the Prince and his followers into the castle, and they set to work to brick up the entrance to the stone cellar, so that the giant was soon starved to death.

The Prince rewarded Jack with many precious gifts, and amongst these was his own sword, which he begged his little companion to wear for his sake, and to use it in destroying wicked giants wherever he should encounter them. After parting from the Prince, Jack passed near a forest, and fancied he heard groans coming from the trees. On drawing near he saw a huge giant dragging by the hair a knight and lady whom he had captured. Jack had now a fair chance for making use of the sword the Prince had given him, and having quietly approached, he dealt the giant so well aimed a blow across the legs that he fell to the ground, when Jack quickly despatched him, and released the captives.

Jack learned that the giant just killed by him had a brother with a hideous great head on a small body, who was so savage that the very sight of him, with his frightful club covered with iron spikes, was enough to terrify people to death. Although this monster was almost more than his match, Jack was not daunted, and he watched at the mouth of the cave where the giant lived, until he should come out. And he did come out by-and-by, with a horrid roar, rolling his great eyes, and grinding his teeth; Jack then, by a thrust through his right arm, disabled him, and after this he soon found an opportunity to finish him.

After this the Knight and his lady invited Jack to their castle, where they gave a grand feast in his honour. But while they were all enjoying themselves, a servant, who could



scarcely speak for fright, came to say that a fierce giant with two heads, named Thundel, was coming, and that he was now very close. At this even the bravest of the knights present shook with fear; but Jack told them to take courage, and he would show them how to deal with the giant. He then ordered the drawbridge, which crossed the moat that ran round the Knight's castle, to be nearly sawn through. By this time the giant had arrived, and Jack went out to meet him. After leading him a dance round the castle, so that all the lords and ladies might see him, Jack ran lightly over the drawbridge. The giant attempted to follow him, but the bridge, being sawn in the middle, gave way beneath his immense weight, and he fell plump into the water, where Jack soon made an end of him.

There now remained only one giant to be got rid of, who held a Duke's daughter among his captives. Jack was determined to rescue this fair lady, although it was a task of very great danger, for the giant's gate was guarded by two fiery dragons, at the sight of which hideous monsters he for the first time, felt a little afraid. But this did not last long; he soon took courage again, and coming close up to the gate, found there was a huge horn, under which these words were written—

Whoever can this trumpet blow
Will cause the giant's overthrow.

Jack now took a long breath, and manfully blew the horn; the gates flew open, and in a moment the giant, his castle, and the dragons turned into a blue mist, and were no more to be seen. Nothing remained but the captives: amongst these was the Duke's beautiful daughter, who soon after was given by her father in marriage to our brave little hero, JACK,—a reward he fully deserved, for being so famous a GIANT-KILLER.



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